

# Awash in Data, Marketers Still Find Ad Targeting Capabilities Lacking

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The push for more effective ad targeting remains one of marketers' chief priorities, evidenced by two reports released this year.

More than half of client-side marketers worldwide said leveraging data for more effective segmentation and targeting is among their top three organizational priorities in 2019, according to an [Econsultancy and Adobe](#) survey concluded in December 2018.

## Which Areas Do Client-Side Marketers Worldwide Expect to Top Their Company's Priority List in 2019?

% of respondents

**Better use of data for more effective audience segmentation and targeting**

55%

**Improving customer intelligence and insights for a holistic customer view**

42%

**Integration of marketing tools for greater efficiencies and better workflow**

42%

**Understanding return on marketing investment (ROMI)**

39%

**Building an integrated experience platform**

32%

**Scalable campaign management**

25%

**Increased automation of time-consuming tasks**

21%

**Managing headcount and realignment of job functions**

14%

**Other**

1%

**None of the above**

2%

*Note: n=1,098; respondents could select up to three options  
Source: Econsultancy, "2019 Digital Trends" in partnership with Adobe, Feb 19, 2019*

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In a January 2019 poll of marketing industry professionals by the [Interactive Advertising Bureau \(IAB\)](#) and [Winterberry Group](#), 43.9% of respondents said that predictive modeling and segmentation is among the data-driven marketing tasks that will occupy most of their time this year. And with that comes marketers' investment in artificial intelligence (AI) products that [automate the creation of custom audience segments](#).

But even as marketers' capabilities are expanded by technologies like AI, they still have many improvements to make. Research shows that people are increasingly [finding digital ads to be too intrusive](#). And tracking restrictions in Apple's Safari browser and data regulations like the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the California Consumer Privacy Act add further difficulty to ad targeting.

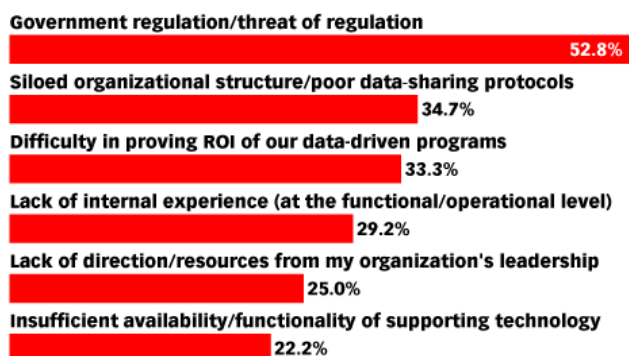
Over half of the marketing professionals polled by IAB and Winterberry Group said that the threat of government regulation may impede their ability to derive value from their data-driven initiatives this year.

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**Challenges that May Impede Their Ability to Derive Value from Their Data-Driven Marketing/Media Initiatives in 2019 According to US Digital Marketers**

% of respondents

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Source: Winterberry Group, "The Outlook for Data 2019: A Snapshot Into the Evolving Role of Audience Insight" in partnership with IAB Data Center of Excellence, March 5, 2019

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On the positive side, because digital advertising allows marketers to precisely target users, it has been **perceived to be less wasteful** than traditional media. That idea is helping **drive TV advertising's digitization**. But some marketers still aren't satisfied with what's actually possible with digital segmentation and targeting.

Food brand Avocados From Mexico has demanded that its ad partners guarantee digital audience reach, **Digiday reported**. The brand asked for audience guarantees, using Nielsen measurements to verify that a majority of ads reach its intended customers. This initiative arose after the company learned that only 20% to 30% of its digital impressions had been shown to its target audience.

Other brands that use audience guarantees include Procter & Gamble, Johnson & Johnson, E\*Trade, Dave & Buster's, UPS and Red Robin, according to a Nielsen spokesperson.

Avocados From Mexico's struggle to consistently reach its intended audience is representative of the ad targeting and segmentation issues that a majority of marketers grapple with.

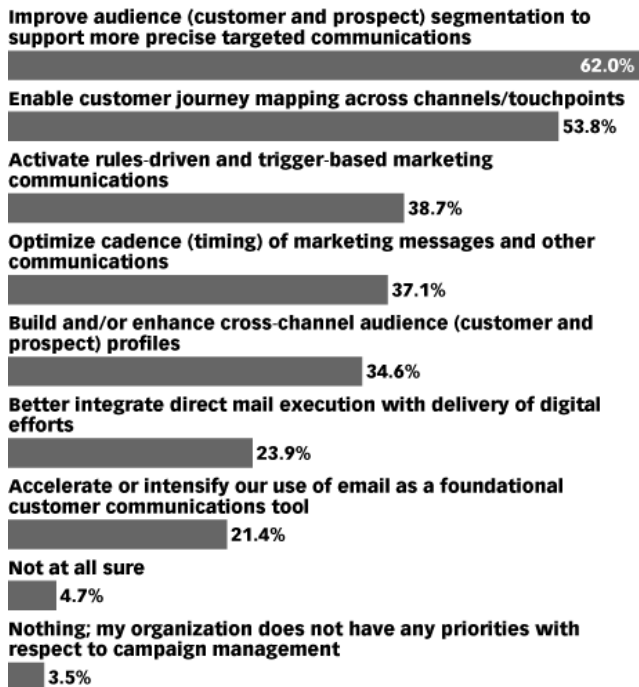
Those advertisers who may not be reaching their target consumers via digital channels encounter **inaccurate data**, web browsers **purging ad trackers**, and difficulties with accurately **identifying users across multiple devices**. And these hurdles aren't new.

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## Campaign Management Priorities According to Marketing Professionals in North America, Jan 2018

% of respondents

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*Note: includes agencies, brand marketers and marketing services/technology providers*  
*Source: Data & Marketing Association (DMA) and Winterberry Group, "Elevating the Customer Experience" sponsored by Pitney Bowes, April 18, 2018*

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Almost two-thirds of marketing professionals polled by Winterberry Group and the Data & Marketing Association in January 2018 said improving audience segmentation to support more precise targeting was a campaign management priority.